IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 4 and 8 and amend the claims as follows:

1. (presently amended) A method for echo reduction, comprising:

~~setting a predetermined time period having an expiration;~~

~~initializing a timer to operate for said predetermined time period at a start of a~~ ~~transmission of communication signals; and~~

attenuating communication signals at the start of ~~said~~ a transmission until at least one of:

(i) an ~~said~~ expiration of ~~said~~ a predetermined time period; or

(ii) receipt of one or more signals from one or more echo cancellers indicating that echo signals are cancelled below a threshold. ~~to reduce amplitudes of echo signals prior to echo cancellation.~~

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving one or more echo canceller signals from said one or more echo cancellers; and

adjusting an attenuation value based on the echo canceller signals to attenuate the communication signals.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing for one or more attenuation values; and

attenuating the communication signals based on the attenuation values.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

setting the attenuation values based on an estimated effectiveness of ~~the~~ said one or more echo cancellers from the start of the communication.

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) A method for echo reduction, comprising:

detecting a start of a communication;

receiving one or more signals from one or more echo cancellers indicating that echo signals are cancelled below a threshold; and

attenuating communication signals of the communication for a predetermined time to reduce amplitudes of echo signals based on the signals received from the echo cancellers prior to echo cancellation.